

TESTIMONY TO THE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE
IN SUPPORT OF Raised Bill 5574 ***AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF
THE SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT BIOSCIENCE CAPABILITIES ASSESSMENT
REPORT***

March 18, 2014

Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone, and members of the Commerce Committee, I am here to testify in support of Raised Bill 5574.

I have lived in East Lyme, Connecticut for 24 years and have spent that time involved in the development of new pharmaceutical agents. I spent 20 years at Pfizer, and participated in the development and approval of multiple therapeutic agents. I have spent the last four years as an independent consultant advising both large and small companies on issues of drug development, efficacy and safety. I am a member of the Southeastern Connecticut Entrepreneurs Network (SECTen).

I have been in the pharmaceutical industry as it transitioned from one of primarily large pharmaceutical companies developing traditional small molecules for pills, to a more nimble, although smaller, conglomeration of large pharma companies and small biotechnology companies developing new types of therapeutic agents while at the same time changing the entire way drugs are developed. In the way the industry now works, large firms and small ones cooperate in bringing new technologies to bear in overcoming difficult to treat diseases and difficult to manage issues in drug development such as attrition and unsustainable costs of the development process, as well as helping to bring forth an age of personalized medicine.

This new way of discovering and developing pharmaceutical agents, which depends on the intimate collaboration of large pharmaceutical companies with small independent biotech firms and consultants, has partly been responsible for the painful down-sizing of big pharma which we have felt in our region, but it also provides a unique opportunity for Southeastern Connecticut. We have the talent and already have some start-up biotech firms, which are needed for this new way of discovering and developing drugs. They can thrive in this environment, so long as a critical mass of bioscience activity can be nurtured and maintained in the region.

Efforts already underway, such as the recently announced CURE incubator to be built on the Pfizer Groton campus or SECT Tech under the auspices of the University of Connecticut are important first steps. Raised Bill 5574 can help support such efforts by coordinating them to assure that existing resources used most effectively, while at the same time providing additional infrastructure such as a Networking Hub to help build local support networks for entrepreneurs who have chosen to stay in Southeastern Connecticut, and to help attract new ones. By supporting active marketing of what the region has to offer, it can directly help build critical mass.

I therefore strongly support Bill 5547 as an integral part of the efforts to make Connecticut a leader in biotechnology.

Sincerely,
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